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TAGS: OPRC, KMDR, KPAO, GM

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S. WTO LEBANON EXECUTIONS
IRAN;BERLIN

- A. Lead Stories Summary
- B. (U.S.) Secret CIA Prisons
- C. (WTO) Hong Kong Talks
- D. (Lebanon) UN Report
- E. (U.S.) Stanley Williams Executed
- F. (Iran) Reaction To Ahmadinejad Statement

- A. Lead Stories Summary

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HEADLINES

Physicians Continue To Threaten Strikes - Coalition Agrees
On Drug Prices (Frankfurter Allgemeine)

Stanley Williams Executed (Sueddeutsche Zeitung)

Investigators Of Council Of Europe Incriminate CIA (Die
Welt)

Execution Despite Strong Protests (Frankfurter Rundschau)

Physicians Postpone National Strike (Tagesspiegel)

Chemical Industry Lobby Asserts Its View (Berliner Zeitung)

Editorials focused on the strikes of physicians and the CIA
Affair. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute opened with a
story on Stanley Williams execution, and ARD-TV's early
evening newscast Tagesschau opened with a story on the
strike of physicians.

B. (U.S.) Secret CIA Prisons

1. "Remaining Silent For Political Reasons"

Nicolas Richter commented in center-left Sueddeutsche
Zeitung of Munich (12/14):

"The Masri case only became a scandal on December 4
when an American newspaper reported that the former Interior
Minister Schily has known about Masri's rendition since May
2004. The U.S. administration apparently leaked this
detail. In the run-up to Secretary Rice's visit to Europe,
she wanted to redirect the European criticism of the CIA
flights towards the critics. The sad message is that the
U.S. administration does not just commit renditions in
Europe, but also determines when Europeans would gain
awareness of this problem.. Of course, it would be
outrageous if CIA agents kidnap a German citizen. It is
natural for every government to help the victim. If the
government fails to do that, it should be the duty of the
parliament to take the government to account. However, the
parliament remained silent in 2005 due to political reasons
and lack of interest. The SPD and the Greens remained
silent because they were in government and one did not want
to damage its own interior minister. The CDU/CSU and FDP
already saw themselves in government and did not want to
undercut the consensus that time is ripe for reconciliation

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with Washington. And there was disinterest because the Bundestag assumed that most Germans would rather see Masri as an Arab than a German."

2. "Europe's Principles"

Dietrich Alexander observed in right-of-center Die Welt of Berlin (12/14):

"The findings of Swiss lawyer Dick Marty will cause at least nervousness in Washington and certainly great panic reactions in some EU capitals: The U.S. intelligence CIA

has apparently kidnapped terror suspects and transported them illegally through several countries, disregarding all legal standards. The old continent is not willing to ignore the issue of secret CIA flights and the suspicion of covert prisons. Europe is absolutely right here. The Europeans must completely clarify this ugly story and stop it; otherwise the much-desired new faithful transatlantic relationship would fail. That Europe cannot accept lawless areas needs no explanation.. Poland and Romania must answer inconvenient questions. If violations of European laws become evident, severe sanctions must be imposed, because Europe must not allow subversion of its legal standards."

3. "Very Discreet"

Lorenz Maroldt said in a front-page editorial in centrist Der Tagesspiegel of Berlin (12/14):

"Former Interior Minister Schily knew what al Masri had to go through. A reliable source - the U.S. ambassador himself - had informed him about it. Schily probably also knew that al Masri was part of the Islamist scene, that he had been under surveillance but nothing was found to charge him. Schily remained silent, claiming that he had promised secrecy. He exchanged our confidence in the rule of law with confidentiality."

4. Right-of-center Saarbrcker Zeitung (12/14) had this to say:

"The scandal was kept secret for months. Nobody thought it was necessary to get in touch with al Masri himself. That is heartless and cruel. And the few things we know, we only know because of the media's determination to investigate the case. That there will be a public debate in parliament today is the result of permanent public

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pressure. Given the strange attitude of Foreign Minister Steinmeier and others, the opposition is right to consider setting up a parliamentary commission to investigate the matter. This scandal stinks."

C. (WTO) Hong Kong Talks

1. "Without Ambition"

Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger noted in an editorial in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (12/14):

"It is depressing to see at the beginning of the WTO conference in Hong Kong that the only ones who are intensifying their efforts are the opponents of globalization. But their militant measures are everything but useful because they continue to spread the fairy tale that trade liberalization would paralyze the development countries.. Many who cheered in Cancn two years ago have now realized that Cancn was a disaster. Brazil played a considerable role and is now again playing a less glorious role. But the role of the Europeans is even more ignominious. Their modest agricultural offer is not very appealing in promoting the willingness of others to make courageous decisions. Three things can be predicted if the outcome of the meeting is disappointing: Protectionism will increase, the authority of the WTO will decline by the same measure, and bilateralism will definitely gain the upper hand. This would not be a disaster, but it would in any case be worse than a multilateral treaty system."

2. Rolf-Dieter Krause commented on ARD-TV's (national

channel one) late evening newscast Tagesthemen (12/14):

"We are responsible for our own competitiveness, but if we want to improve it, we need rules of the game to make this possible. We are unable to agree on them on our own, but Europe as a whole is a global power when it comes to trade. This trade makes it possible for us to talk at eye level with China, India, and the United States, and to give globalization a more or less clear structure. It is indeed crazy that the main controversy again centers on the farmers. But we should know that the Americans and others are even worse than we are, and Europe at least offered to reduce its agricultural subsidies. And its openness for imports, especially from the least developed countries, is

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rather exemplary. No, the role Europe plays is not a bad one and also lies in our very own interest."

3. Center-right Westfalenpost of Hagen (12/14) argued:

"The WTO would have the chance to shape global trade in a fairer way, give globalization reasonable rules thus removing the fears on the part of the workers and farmers everywhere in the world. But this is not very likely. Too many nations would then have to shed old skins. This refers especially to the wealthy North, which would have to cut agricultural subsidies. Step by step, even though it would profit from it in the long term. One thing is certain: a failure of the WTO round would not stop globalization. If the WTO does not agree on firm rules for world trade, the law of the jungle will continue to dominate."

4. Center-right Ostsee-Zeitung of Rostok (12/14) argued:

"At the right time, Europe has offered global trade a through pass: 46 of the least developed countries should be allowed to deliver their goods without tariffs to the West. If America gives up its concerns and the threshold countries do not set up new obstacles, the development package could be one of the few highlights that can be expected from the world trade summit. But the 149 unequal brothers are still miles away from the great goal of working out a global trade treaty and of making it ready for signing by the end of 2006. The future path is not clear and the will to resolve the conflict is weak. While the developing nations are calling for fair rules with which they could gain a greater share of the slice of the cake, Europe and the United States favor a liberalized trade according to their gusto. The old specter of protectionism is still alive - on all sides."

D. (Lebanon) UN Report

1. "On Probation"

Hans-Christian Raler commented in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (12/14):

"The Syrian plan worked. Damascus played for time in the investigations of the Hariri assassination. The country will probably be given another suspended sentence. Since June, the Assad regime had time to prove that it had nothing to do with the assassination in Beirut, but it only started to cooperate with the investigators at the last minute. This was just in time so the Mehlis report does not lay the

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basis for imposing sanctions on Syria. This will encourage Syria to continue its diversionary strategy.. Without exerting pressure on the Syrian leadership, the search for Hariri's murderers will be fruitless. Whether this pressure can be sustained is questionable, because six months is very long time in the Middle East."

2. "Relaxation For Assad"

Andrea Nsse observed in left-of-center Frankfurter Rundschau (12/14):

"A key piece is missing in the puzzle Mehlis has put together so far. Did Washington and the regime strike a deal? This question moves many observers in Damascus. They assume that the U.S. could allow Assad's brother in law, Shawkat, and his brother, Maher, to get away with it. In return, the speculations assume the regime's political approval of the situation in Iraq. Some say that the blackening of their names in the Mehlis report supports this theory."

3. Centrist MQRkische Oderzeitung of Frankfurt (12/14) editorialized:

"The evidence of the crass political terror attacks indicates Basher el Assad's involvement. Is it the president, his father's old supporters, or independent officers along the Iraqi border who fight for their own interests? Nobody knows who really rules Syria at the moment. Around the young president there still seem to be some politicians and spies living in the past. They act in the dark as if they wanted to make politics based on the old patterns of a civil war, in a country Damascus no longer rules."

E. (U.S.) Stanley Williams Executed

1. "Weary Death"

Washington correspondent Christoph von Marschall filed the following commentary for centrist Der Tagesspiegel of Berlin (12/14):

"Capital punishment means for the majority of prisoners a life sentence, without any chance to be released after 15 years as in Germany. This creates two questions: Why then should there be any executions, since the alleged deterrence of capital punishment cannot function if only a few people

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on death row are executed? And why is someone like Tookie Williams not be pardoned, he has sworn off his previous life and helped many young people avoid committing crimes?. The case of Tookie Williams shows another fundamental difference between the European and American way of thinking. Europe promotes the rehabilitation of criminals.. In the United States the idea of atonement plays a more important role..

"It cannot be rule out that the United States will give up capital punishment some day in the future. But if so, it will not be overnight. A slow phasing out without a formal decision would be thinkable. Not only the number of executions, but also the number of killings, has continuously declined. The death penalty could still exist in the law some day in the future, but in practice, it would mean: life imprisonment."

2. "In the Name Of The Victims"

Mariam Lau judged in an editorial in right-of-center Die Welt of Berlin (12/14):

"We could now lean back and declare the whole matter an act of barbarity which fits the accusations of torture in CIA prisons.. Is the United States a nation of merciless

supporters of the Old Testament?. When Europeans try to understand the U.S. way of thinking, people easily ignore that victims have a much higher priority in the United States than the rehabilitation of the perpetrators, a mindset that is much more important in Europe. The clerk whom Williams allegedly shot or the Taiwanese immigrants family he allegedly shot two weeks later are much closer to the Americans than Williams proclaimed change to a peaceful citizen..

"For the Americans, it is a mystery that a terror suspect like Egyptian born German national Reda Seyam is left walking openly in Berlin and that people are annoyed at the CIA when it questions Khaled el Masri.. They do not understand that eleven German holidaymakers were killed in Jerba but that there was no state to act for them. They do not understand that it is not the talk of the town that terrorists kidnapped a German archaeologist in Iraq.. All this does not mean that legal principles should be jettisoned for which Europe fought so long.. But even in the United States, the death penalty is losing support because many Americans are realizing the arrogance of this act. But there is reason to wonder why the fear of populism

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and even worse developments comes up, when we talk about the victims of a crime.."

3. Right-of-center Mnchener Merkur (12/14) argued:

"The evil suspicion is obvious that California's Governor Schwarzenegger, even though he received a European education as he was born in Austria, has refused to grant clemency out of political reasons. The star 'terminator' is sinking; in California, a majority of people are opposed to the death penalty, and Schwarzenegger is now joining the disgusting race of American politicians who want to demonstrate leadership by demonstrating a well calculated mercilessness. We are wondering for how long the population of a cultured nation wants to expose itself to such macabre games. Maybe Williams' death will give new impetus to the hesitant debate about whether lethal injections and an electric chair are compatible with a society that feels so strongly committed to freedom and human rights as the American society."

4. Center-right Neue Osnabrcker Zeitung (12/14) had this to say:

"The ostracism of the death penalty and the principle 'mercy before merciless retaliation' are without doubt parts of the achievements which old Europe has cultivated for a long time and in which it has a lot more experience than the United States. Schwarzenegger turned his back to all this and did not prevent a new execution. And this time, it would have been possible without questioning the entire system. Revenge seems to be much more important in the otherwise excessively Christian United States than reconciliation. But such a view does not convince others either in politics or in the criminal law. Are these the values the American people derive from their belief?"

5. Center-right Northwest-Zeitung of Oldenburg (12/14) argued:

"What does the death penalty stand for? Basically that the state allows itself to take revenge in the name of justice: an eye for an eye; this may satisfy the relatives of the victims, but it does not have a deterring effect. The death penalty contributes to a violent climate in a society. It is an expression of an archaic understanding of

the law, which accepts killings by the state as something

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that is given. It may be coincidence that 'Terminator' Arnold Schwarzenegger was allowed to play master over life and death. But it is characteristic for a U.S. society whose current leadership obviously considers violence in its different variations a legitimate means of politics."

6. Right-of-center Leipziger Volkszeitung (12/14) judged:

"California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger did not grant former gang leader Tookie Williams clemency. Following his recent setbacks in the elections, he wants to score points among his supporters again, and is using an execution for political purposes. The United States should no longer stand in the same unspeakable line together with China, Iran, and Vietnam. These countries are responsible for 97 percent of global executions. America wants to fundamentally differ from countries of injustice where arbitrariness and human rights violations are part of everyday life. The abolition of the death penalty would be an unmistakable signal."

7. Right-of-center Landeszeitung of Lneburg (12/14) observed:

"The excruciating long agony of Stanley Williams and the substantiating suspicion of a secret CIA torture camp system, are two facets of the same phenomenon: the U.S. empire is distancing itself from the western community that shares the same values. If the arm of the death row inmate is being disinfected before the lethal injection is being administered, then this is only a parody on humanity. Indeed, the United States is putting itself in line with countries like China and Saudi Arabia, which want to bring stability to their societies by decapitations and shots in the back of the neck. But the regime shows this reprehensible toughness not only to the inside. Since the United States has been forced to sip at the goblet of its own vulnerability, it is waging a war on terror by disregarding those values that should be defended against terrorists."

F. (Iran) Reaction To Ahmadinejad Statement

1. "Ahmadinejad's World"

Markus Ziener commented in business daily Handelsblatt of Duesseldorf (12/14):

"If Ahmadinejad takes his country further on the path

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of isolation, stricter UN sanctions could soon be imposed. There have been American sanctions on Iran since November 1979. President Bush extended the boycott for another year last November. Washington desires that especially European countries impose sanctions as well. If that became reality, it would hardly impress Ahmadinejad. An extension of sanctions would probably encourage his anti-Israeli policy. Iran sees Israel as a western and American pillar in the region, and a large majority of Iranians support the anti-Israeli-driven policy of supporting the Palestinian matter, rejecting Jerusalem and fighting against America. At least half of the Iranians grew up with this propaganda in the last 26 years. If the president uses these clichs, he can expect to be supported."

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